

The CBC is going to be a vital institution moving forward, especially when it comes to news programming. Right now, it's basically the only news service maintaining credible balance in the Canadian news industry, and more effort needs to be made to contribute to that. As a condition for receiving more funding, the federal government needs to require CBC to make all of its news content ad-free, on both digital and broadcast. For our public broadcaster to operate in an effective manner, it must be free of corporate influence through advertising during news programming on radio and television, as well as on their website and through podcasts. This will also prevent them from competing for advertising revenue with other news sources, and aid the sector overall. This should be completely achievable: after all, Australia invests far less tax money in their ABC service. Not only does it remain ad-free, but it's actually split across THREE separate television services. We don't even have a CBC 2! This should be directly addressed through this consultation.

Additionally, it is a mistake to think that streaming is a wholesale replacement for broadcast. There will be plenty to lament if we abandon local and over-the-air broadcasting, especially a few years from now when streaming services reach saturation and their limitations as a form of content delivery become more apparent. Ensuring that Canadians have guaranteed access to the services currently available in the "skinny basic" package is going to be extremely important moving forward, as other forms of distribution lack the communalism inherent with broadcast.

During the digital television transition, Canada seriously missed the boat by failing to implement a Freeview OTA system similar to what was established in the UK and Australia. We should consider creating a similar system that makes all "skinny basic" services (with particular emphasis on public broadcasters) free for all Canadians to access over-the-air in every area where it is possible to do so. This may prove to be a challenge in some areas due to geography, but the internet provides many alternatives. In fact, VMedia had the right idea by trying to offer the skinny basic as a downloadable app, which was unfortunately struck down by an Ontario court. While I can't say for certain that their approach would've been ideal, this is the type of accessibility that needs to be explored for these important services.

However, it is also worth noting that large parts of Australia have similar geographic restrictions, yet OTA Freeview has still been optimized!